

Radicalization of the Population in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Oblasts: Factors, Types, and Risk Groups

Introduction

Over the past decade, the Kyrgyzstan part of the Fergana Valley has been a hotbed for various political, religious, cross-border, and interethnic tensions.

In 2005, deep dissatisfaction with the authorities expressed by of Jalal-Abad oblast led to an open clash with the national government, which resulted in an illegal regime change in Kyrgyzstan.

In 2010, a second so-called “revolution” took place in the history of independent Kyrgyzstan and one of the epicenters was also Jalal-Abad oblast – the “small motherland” of Kurmanbek Bakiev, President of Kyrgyzstan at the time - where confrontations erupted between various groups, struggling for power and redistribution of resources. These events were followed by large-scale and brutal interethnic clashes in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts in June 2010, which claimed the lives of more than 500 people, left thousands of people without shelter, and, most importantly, have led to an increased loss of trust between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz populations that continues to this date.

In addition, during that period, there were numerous religious and extremist movements in the region, which had started becoming more active than ever before, up to and including open confrontations with authorities (e.g., in the town of No’okat in 2008, there was a conflict between Hizb ut-Tahrir followers and the local government). Moreover, due to outstanding issues related to the demarcation and delimitation between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, on the one hand there are frequent violent tensions in the border areas of Batken oblast between Kyrgyz and Tajiks ethnic groups and on the other hand, between the residents of the border villages in Batken oblast and law enforcement agencies of neighboring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

All those factors, and today’s low level of confidence and high level of suspicious attitudes toward one another and the authorities, have been

conducive to the significant growth of all forms of extremism and radicalism in the region during this period and the potential for its further expansion.

The **purpose** of this survey is to objectively analyze the perceptions of societal processes on the part of different groups and communities possessing extremist and radical views, as well as structures intended at counteracting extremism and radicalism at the local level.

The **objectives** of the survey are to reveal risk groups, factors, and catalysts driving individuals towards radicalization.

Without taking anyone's side or position, the survey itself represents the perception of political and socioeconomic processes and conditions through the respondents' eyes. Consequently, not all the information provided by the respondents match reality. Nevertheless, it is worthy noting that people's perceptions are as important – if not more important – than the facts, when talking about extremism and radicalism.

Because of stressful situations, people tend to take certain extremist and radical actions based on their perceptions, stereotypes, and expectations that either relate or do not relate to reality. In this regard, it is imperative to understand what people think, feel, and perceive as it gives an opportunity to deeply understand the processes and events actually unfolding in the region. Perhaps, these processes and situations were perceived one way in the past, and will be perceived and evaluated from a new or different angle. This document reflects the perceptions of the individuals interviewed at the time of the research.

In the survey, the concepts of “**extremism**” and “**radicalism**” refer to ideas that call for the use of violent methods in achieving certain goals, and also undermine human feelings and dignity on the grounds of ethnicity, political views, and religion, including intolerance and resentment in society. These concepts also include actions aimed at using violent methods against opponents of different ethnic, religious, and other groups.

In survey, **catalysts** mean facts, phenomena, situations, factors, groups, people, and organizations, which serve to amplify and boost radicalism and extremism.

This field study coincided with the period, when most of the local population negatively perceived any form of research by NGOs or international organizations. Such suspicion and lack of confidence hampered

the survey process. Some respondents voiced a fear of persecution and pressure from law enforcement agencies, in connection with the recent events. This manifested in suspicion and detention of religious leaders for their participation in extremist movements, and spreading rumors about potential conflicts, terrorist attacks in the South.

Survey Methodology

This report is based on the results of both desk and field research. The field research was carried out from May 5 to 25, 2015, in multiethnic and monoethnic communities of Batken, Jalal-Abad, and Osh oblasts. In particular, the survey was conducted in 7 monoethnic and 4 multiethnic communities of Batken oblast, 7 mixed and 10 monoethnic communities of Jalal-Abad oblast, and 7 mixed and 12 monoethnic communities in Osh oblast.

Qualitative research methods were used to collect the data. In particular, it was collected through anonymous and confidential in-depth face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and observation methods by participating in some activities of targeted groups.

In total, 132 respondents participated in the study. The composition of respondents varied and consisted of members of local authorities, law enforcement agencies, local NGOs and international organizations, religious leaders, members of various religious groups / movements, opinion leaders, athletes, members of organized crime groups, as well as ordinary citizens.

From that number, 35% were ethnic Uzbeks, 3% were ethnic Tajiks, 2% were ethnic Uighurs and 60% were ethnic Kyrgyz. This survey revealed that extremism and radicalism in the regions are mainly manifest in three types: political, religious, and ethnonational.

The survey found that the citizens of Kyrgyzstan, who depart to Syria, are from multiethnic, monoethnic, and closed communities with ethnic minorities, as well as from border areas.

In all three oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, the causes of departure are similar to those factors, situations, and processes, which drive people to more radical and extreme actions aimed at changing their lifestyle, e.g., departure to

combat zones to participate in establishing “new caliphate” and a “fair state.”

Radicalism is guided by ideas and views that substantiate fundamental and decisive changes of the existing social and political order, resorting in extreme and intrusive methods.

Now, radicalists are engaged in extremist actions in the territory of another country---Syria---however, there is an inherent danger that ideas and ideology of Takfiris could find active and passive support among a part of the population. An other major risk relates to the fact that many people are recruited by deception due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of such concepts as “Jihad,” “Caliphate,” or “Takfiri.”

The manifestation of radicalism and extremism can be traced in all three areas, which is confirmed by the presence of religious extremist organizations, when citizens travel to Syria, facts of passive support, compassion and dissemination of banned “Islamic State” ideology. Religious radicalism is growing as an ideology, which may trigger actions under internal or external impetuses and it becomes the only way to address the numerous, ongoing issues for a part of the population.

In the context of Kyrgyzstan, the key factors of radicalism are the high level of distrust among all segments of society (including all ethnic groups) with regard to the government and law enforcement authorities, due to social problems.

The key generators of these ideas are the politicians, who, in practice, support and manipulate public sentiments to achieve their goals. Moreover, the trend toward establishing, supporting, and funding youth martial arts clubs, which sometimes come to resemble criminal groups, by individual politicians in order to use them in their political struggle create conditions for violent conflict, which is a cause for concern. Such martial arts clubs have been established in all three southern oblasts.

The survey revealed that the respondents have different levels of understanding of what “extremism” and “radicalism” means, ranging from an entire lack of knowledge to specific in-depth understanding of those concepts. Some respondents admitted that they completely did not know the meaning of these terms.

About 30% of respondents, especially those citizens who do not practice religion, have demonstrated their specific understanding of these terms. They call “extremists” those males, who have long beards, and wear long shirts and loose trousers. These individuals determine “extremism” exclusively based on human appearance, regardless of what religion and / or views that person adheres to.

This raises concerns that some categories of such respondents (particularly ethnic Kyrgyz) tend to perceive extremists as bearded men having an Uzbek or Tajik appearance, but not Kyrgyz-looking males even if they have beards and wear long shirts.

Another group of interviewed (20%), including several local government authorities, associate “extremism” and “radicalism” with Islam as a religion in general. According to them, such words as “Islam” and “extremism” are synonymous and the latter is an integral part of the first.

The imams themselves see “extremism” as an imposition of their understandings and beliefs to other people through coercion and / or fraud. “Radicalism,” in their views, is an expression of someone’s opinion and views in a heated and rude manner under hopeless circumstances. It was revealed that local Imams normally accuse the followers of other religions and beliefs of extremism and radicalism.

The fourth group of respondents (30%) associate “extremism” with such well-known, nontraditional Islamic movements in Kyrgyzstan as Hizb ut-Tahrir, Akromiya, IMU (*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*), and others. Having no information about these movements, such respondents consider their members as major and sometimes only extremists and radicals, at the same time they are unable to explain, why they think in kind and merely referring to the information in local media and statements made by individual politicians, law enforcement, etc. in connection with these movements.

A similar, but more profound interpretation is given by other respondents (10%), who have theological knowledge. According to these people, radicalism is the measures and actions taken by certain stakeholders against faith-based rules in the name of religion, resulting in a breach of such rules among the followers of that religion. Accordingly, such definition includes many, if not all, nontraditional religious organizations and

movements in Kyrgyzstan, including Hizb ut-Tahrir, Akromiya, etc., as their statutes, and members' practices and views in regards to some key issues are not in line with the traditional Islam of the Fergana Valley.

Some members of Hizb ut-Tahrir and Akromiya in turn do not consider themselves to be extremists or radicals. In their understanding, extremism is an action of certain individuals aimed at persecuting others, whose positions and opinions not in line with their point of view. For them, the secret services and law enforcement agencies representing the state are the extremists, since in their judgment, members of Hizb ut-Tahrir become subject to prosecution and violations on the part of such agencies for their beliefs and views. Furthermore, they believe the opinions and information, according to which Hizb ut-Tahrir or any other organization in the country is considered as an extremist Party, is a widespread misconception, as their actions have, categorically no signs of extremism envisaging the harassment of individuals, whose views differ from that of Hizb ut-Tahrir members.

One more group of respondents (10%) describes “extremism” through the prism of geopolitics. In their understanding, “extremism” and “radicalism” are processes and tools, which have been conceived and worked out by Western countries, notably by the United States and European countries, with the aim to weaken and / or destroy other countries, especially Muslim states, through artificially pushing people against each other. People from different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups living in one or a neighboring community, according to this interpretation, are pushed into all kinds of conflicts (ethnic, religious, etc.).

Conclusions:

The survey revealed that the level of radicalization in the South is increasing along different forms of ethnonationalist, religious, and political lines. Perception and response to current social, political, and economic processes actually occurs through these three forms of radicalism. Certain internal and external factors could stumble and trigger radical activities in specific regions and areas, and fragmented pockets of instability and violence could emerge.

Government authorities, politicians, and political processes continue to remain key factors, catalysts, and, concurrently, stabilizers. The survey found that the primary responsibility for preventing and countering radicalization and extremism is with the government authorities, national agencies, and politicians.

Despite the passage of a relatively long period since the brutal interethnic events in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts in June 2010, and different attempts taken by the government of Kyrgyzstan, international organizations, and civil society organizations towards peacebuilding and restoring mutual trust between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations, the current level of confidence in each other and the government authorities is still low. A similar pattern has been observed in Batken oblast, particularly in boarder communities with Tajikistan. The confidence between the citizens of Kyrgyzstan (ethnic Kyrgyz) and Tajikistan (ethnic Tajiks), who live side by side in the same community is extremely low. In fact, all the parties live in fear for their security, anticipating violent interethnic conflict.

If ethnonational radicalism is manifested openly and can be observed with the naked eye, the ideology of religious radicalism and extremism are progressing influenced by undercurrents. Religious extremists and groups of radicals do not openly declare and express their resentment and frustrations due to fear, and pressure and prosecution by law enforcement agencies. Repression and invasive means of suppression are even more dangerous, and may lead to larger and violent conflicts. Radicalization of moderate Jamaats becomes apparent same as passive support by a part of the population and sympathetic to their ideology. In connection with what was mentioned above, it is problematic to measure the scales of religious radicalization. In some cases, the State bodies exaggerate them in order to justify their actions or to distract citizens from other issues, which emerge due to ineffectiveness of the government. This situation, in its turn, leads to radicalization.

As of today, the population of the south is highly politicized and, while struggling for power, it uses different methods, including violent tactics. The politicization process among the population is now typical in all the oblasts of Kyrgyzstan, especially within monoethnic communities. The majority of the population, particularly the youth, are attempting to get into power by any means, including by force and criminal methods. The active politicians,

in their struggle for power, use such methods as founding and financing semi-criminal and criminal elements, e.g., martial arts clubs, which provide an example to the population. The young people see this semi-criminal behavior as an opportunity to satisfy their political ambitions. Forthcoming autumn parliamentary elections will catalyze political radicalism.

Chapter I. Ethno-nationalistic extremism

Ethnonational extremism in its essence is directly linked to the concept of nationalism, which is perceived as a reactionary ideology implying national exclusiveness and national superiority. It can be expressed both in the form of fomenting national discord between nationalities of one country and in the form of pitting the people of one country against the other. The first, obviously, appears in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts and the second form prevails in Batken oblast of Kyrgyzstan.

Particularly, **the risk zones are:**

Osh Oblast – Osh City (Amir Temur, Cheryomushki, West), Karasuiskii Rayon (villages of Mady, Nariman, Kashkar-Kyshtak, Dyikan-Kyshtak, Kyzyl-Kyshtak and Kara-Suu Town), Nookatskii Rayon (Eski – Nookat), Uzgenskii Rayon (Uzgen Town), Kara Kuldzhinsky Rayon (), Alayiskii Rayon (village of Gulch), Chong Alayiskii Rayon (village of Daroot – Korgon);

Jalal-Abad Oblast - Jalal-Abad City, Suzakskii Rayon (villages of Atabekov, Yrys, Suzak, Tashbulak Kara Dariya), Bazar-Korgonskii Rayon (village of Bazar-Korgon and Seydekum) Nookenskii Rayon (village of Nooken);

Batken Oblast – Kyzyl - Kiya Town, Kadamjayskii Rayon (villages of Uch-Korgon, Pulgon, Kyzyl-Bulak, Orozbekova Ohna and Halmion), Batkenskii Rayon (villages of Kara Buk, Tash Tumshuk, Kok Tash, Aksay and Aktatyr).

An increase in ethnic consciousness and identification. Today, ethnic consciousness is strongly developed among the larger segment of the Kyrgyz population, predominantly among the youth from remote monoethnic communities of Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh oblasts. There is a growing tendency toward identification mainly by ethnic origin. This has resulted in severe worsening of Kyrgyz population attitudes towards national minorities over the past five years. Consequently, the level of extremely negative perceptions has increased among the ethnic Kyrgyz population,

with intensified feelings of prejudice, suspicion, aggression, and hatred toward ethnic minorities, especially toward ethnic Uzbeks in Jalal-Abad and Osh oblasts, and toward ethnic Tajiks in the communities along the border between Batken oblast and Tajikistan.

While explaining their negative feelings towards Uzbeks in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts, most ethnic Kyrgyz referred to their common history of conflicts and violence (especially the events of June 2010), which to this day make them feel hatred, causing aggression and revenge.

Unlike the ethnic Kyrgyz population, who were openly and fearlessly expressing their feelings and attitudes towards Uzbeks in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts, the majority of ethnic Uzbeks from On-Adyr and Nariman (Uzbek monoethnic communities), who had participated in the interview, did not convey that they had stereotypes about ethnic Kyrgyz. However, some Uzbeks, especially those who have grown up in a multiethnic environment of Osh City, cautiously talked about stereotypes that exist within the Uzbek part of the population towards ethnic Kyrgyz. During the conversation with them, it became obvious that stereotypes prevailing among the Uzbek part of the population, especially the youth, are as much negative as stereotypes among young Kyrgyz population about Uzbeks.

Self-identification from the standpoint of ethnicity is dangerous because it has a devastating effect on civil society and seeds discord among different ethnic groups. Increased aggression and other forms of hostile relationships based on ethnic identity and self-consciousness existing between both sides in relation to each other may repeatedly lead to open ethnic conflicts by exploiting violence.

Feelings of ethnic superiority. In addition to ethnic consciousness among the ethnic Kyrgyz population, there is a sense of ethnic superiority over the national minorities, especially in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts. In general, supporters of such negative feelings are mostly young people from the monoethnic communities in Osh (Gulcho, Daroot-Korgon Otuz-Adyr, Ozgur, and Toleyken) and Jalal-Abad oblasts, and to a lesser extent, the youth from multiethnic urban and / or town communities (for example, the City of Osh, Eski-No'okat, Pulgon, Aravan, and Jalal-Abad City).

Ethnic superiority includes the conception of a traditional preferential role of ethnic Kyrgyz in the Fergana Valley within a certain portion of the population. Such an opinion dominates in Osh oblast and is less developed in Jalal-Abad oblast. These young people perceive themselves as the “owners” of Kyrgyzstan and, accordingly, demand respect from ethnic minorities in the form of honoring both in verbal and nonverbal actions.

In contrast to Osh and Jalal-Abad, a feeling of ethnic superiority among Kyrgyz people, living side by side with ethnic Tajiks in the border areas between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (for example, Kok-Tash, Kara-Bak, Tash Tumshuk, and Aktatyr) is almost equal to zero. This is due to the status of Tajiks, who live in one community along with Kyrgyz, in contrast with the status of Uzbeks living in Osh and Jalal-Abad. The Uzbek population in Osh and Jalal-Abad represents an ethnic minority and are citizens of Kyrgyzstan; however, Tajiks residing in the areas along the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the citizens of Tajikistan, and in fact do not represent a minority in their own country. In other words, both the ethnic Kyrgyz and Tajik populations living in these communities belong to the title nationalities, but from different countries. This is exactly what serves as one of the mitigating factors preventing feeling the of ethnic superiority among ethnic Kyrgyz in the border mixed communities of Batken oblast.

Feelings of social injustice. Feelings of superiority is followed by another factor contributing to negative attitudes among the title nationality – differences in economic and financial capacities. Kyrgyz people from rural areas have relatively weak economic and financial capabilities, due to their remoteness from urban centers and lower levels of entrepreneurship quality in comparison with the urban population, such as in Osh and Jalal-Abad. In these cities, there are relatively higher concentrations of economic and financial resources, which enable material wealth creation.

Increase in feelings of “patriotism” colored by nationalism. Among the youth from the southern oblasts, feelings of patriotism are often synthesized with ethnic nationalism. They understand the term **Patriotism** as a feeling of loyalty to their ethnicity and as an expression of such loyalty in protecting the values and interests of only the title nationality in Kyrgyzstan. In

accordance with such a perception, only ethnic Kyrgyz can be considered patriots in Kyrgyzstan.

The ethnic minorities are too concerned about the status of patriotism based on nationalism. Such concerns related to the level of patriotism aimed at nationalism among the Kyrgyz, which has significantly increased over recent years.

Recently, one can witness the statements made by several nationally oriented ethnic Kyrgyz, including individual politicians, who call themselves patriots and use such words as “*Kyrgyzstan is only for the Kyrgyz.*”

Glorification of those who participated in the interethnic conflicts. The survey also found that the glorification process of active supporters of 2010 interethnic conflict, to date is being observed among ethnic Kyrgyz men and youth, especially in Alaiskii and Chon-Alaiskii Rayons. For example, according to some respondents, the majority of inhabitants residing in those regions started feeling a mania of heroism, because they considered themselves as “an antidote against the Uzbek virus from Osh.” In their opinion, namely those from Alai and Chon-Alai inhabitants are the only defenders of “Kyrgyz lands” against the invasion and capture by ethnic Uzbeks from Osh.

In support of their glorification, a large number of supporters of the June (2010) events argue about the preservation of Kyrgyz Republic’s statehood in general. In other words, they realize and present their illegal and violent acts against ethnic minorities as an effective and successful effort to save the Kyrgyz Republic from its decomposition, claiming separatist goals and actions of the latter.

Such glorification on the part of other inhabitants is expressed in various forms, starting from praise worthy to specific actions. For instance, such individuals are openly introduced to the people in a special manner as “real Kyrgyz baatyr (heroes)” during cultural and sporting events, taking into account their contribution to the 2010 interethnic conflict and their honorific status.

It is indeed worrying that such kind of glorification has a strong potential to trigger people, especially the youth, who look for any means of

self-affirmation and are keen to obtain an exceptional status in their communities.

Witnessing such glorification among the population, some young people from Alaiskii Rayon have shown their readiness to commit similar unlawful actions against members of other ethnic groups.

Rumors: The survey also revealed that rumors are one of the powerful factors that complicate the ethnic situation in all of the oblasts under review. To date, time by time there different rumors of provocation being spread both among ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations regarding possible attacks on each other. For instance, during the field survey in May of 2015, there was another rumor spread among the population about an alleged reoccurrence of violent conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh and Jalal-Abad, but with wider geographical coverage area for that time, including the towns of Uzgen and No'oken. The rumor reflected the activities of ordinary citizens and day-to-day relationships between them.

Mass media often act as catalysts of such rumors, and, intentionally or not, create favorable ground for their transmission.

In parallel, another rumor was spread in Batken oblast (particularly in Batken Town, Khaidarken, and Halmion) among the Kyrgyz population in relation to the May incident on the border with the Uzbek enclave Sokh (Uzbekistan), which resulted in the killing of a Kyrgyzstan citizen, an ethnic Kyrgyz, by an Uzbek border guard. That incident was interpreted by the local Kyrgyz population as an attack against ethnic Kyrgyz by the Uzbekistan army, with the aim of forcibly displacing ethnic Kyrgyz from border areas with Uzbekistan (particularly, the Kyrgyz communities from surrounding Uzbek enclave Sokh territories) and, furthermore, attaching these territories to Uzbekistan.

The authorities, by their inactions, also act as catalysts in terms of the spreading of rumors. Often, when there is no official, credible information from local and national agencies on such incidents, it leads to massive and widespread rumors among the population.

Because of rumors, all the events---even household related ones---are often perceived and presented as an attempt of a party to attack the other side, and subsequently it may easily trigger new clashes.

Criminal groups. Another key factor contributing to ethnonationalistic extremism growth in the south of Kyrgyzstan, particularly the areas generating financial resources (in particular, the cities of Osh, Kara-Suu, Nookan, and Jalal-Abad), is the criminalization of the Kyrgyz population by ethnicity and nationalism. The survey revealed that in spite of broadly stated government campaign against criminals, in most of cases, the criminal groups are replenished with ethnic Kyrgyz youth, who hold extremely nationalistic ideas.

In accordance with a law enforcement officer, within his targeted community (microdistrict Cheremushki, Osh) the number of ethnic Kyrgyz youth in criminal groups has multiplied over at least the last five years, during which time there has been a decrease in the members of other ethnic groups who have had joined the local criminal groups. The alarming increase in the number of ethnic Kyrgyz youth holding nationalistic views, has a potential to increase even more, with faster dynamics. It is dangerous that during any conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and members of other ethnic groups inside the country and / or with people of a neighboring country, it is most probable that the criminals will take the side of the ethnic Kyrgyz and actively participate in the conflict, thus making it more brutal.

Moreover, the ethnonationalistic extremism of monoethnic criminals choose both local and foreign entrepreneurs as their main targeted group, and their activities are aimed at extortion of material and financial benefits.

Nevertheless, not all the criminal groups in the south of the country, even those which preliminary consist of ethnic Kyrgyz, exist and operate on ethnonationalist grounds. People who belong to such groups have lifestyles strictly connected to the so-called “concept of thieves.”¹ This sort of people, at least those who participated in the survey, did not express views supporting ethnonationalism.

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Moreover, despite the fact that their actions and statements clearly reflect criminal elements, they themselves prefer to not be called “criminals” and associated with other criminal gangs, who do not comply with the concept of thieves. Instead, they characterize themselves as “guardians of justice and order” while identifying other criminal groups as “*bespredelschiki*” (outrageous criminals), who do not comply with the concept of thieves.

Chapter II. Factors of Radicalism on the Basis of Religious Ideology: Risk Groups and Catalysts

Higher politicization and the need to address social and political challenges from an Islamic perspective. One of the triggers toward radicalization is a high politicization and the need to address social and political challenges from an Islamic perspective. A 20-year-old systematic socioeconomic crisis with continuous corruption has caused disappointment among people about the secular state and democracy.

For a certain part of the society, regardless of their ethnicity, Islamic political ideologies and ideas of establishing a fair Islamic state or caliphate has become attractive. Appearance of the “Islamic State” (hereafter referred to as IS – author) had the effect of stimulating many people to take part in establishing a caliphate and practically implement its ideas. It is noteworthy that both members of the Kyrgyz ethnicity and other ethnic groups have traveled to join IS. However, according to official statistics, the majority of these people are of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities. Several law enforcement authorities interviewed expressed certainty about this.

Analysis of religious extremism is closely linked to ethnic and national issues. In all three oblasts under study, the members of the Kyrgyz ethnicity perceive and associate religious extremism mainly with members of other ethnic groups.

Addressing the challenges and contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective. The motives that drive young people to join radical organizations include the desire and need to solve challenges and contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective.

After the independence of Kyrgyzstan, there was an Islamic revival process due to policy liberalization in religion, delivery of literature, arrival of missionaries, and the emergence of religious streams brought from different Islamic countries. However, Islam of the Soviet period had not been able to compete with other Islamic streams brought from outside, which were modernistic and giving answers of today’s questions.

The youth seek answers about policy, the economy, and law from an Islamic perspective in our highly politicized society, but imams who have

been educated during the Soviet period or never received any theological education are not able to give such answers to those questions. Therefore, the ideas of such organizations as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Akromiya attract youth, offering them answers about how to address contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective.

Nonintegration of members of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups into the broader society, their lower representation in government structures, a sense of nationalism while selecting to a position in the public service is the contributing factor, which enable the members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities, particularly the youth, to embody their ambitions and sociopolitical capacities within the banned extremist religious and political organization Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Law enforcement agencies are actively engaged in arresting radical members and extremists. However, there is an increased fear of arbitrary arrests, especially among members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities. Respondents from all ethnic groups confirm the problem of arbitrary detention and charges of extremism against members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities, and, in general, lawlessness against them by law enforcement.

As for the members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities, they perceive the current fight against religious extremism as a campaign of arbitrary detention according to ethnicity, which has been launched under the guise of fighting extremism in order for members of law enforcement and government authorities to receive money through payoffs or bribes.

In this environment, there is a high level of distrust in law enforcement and government authorities regarding matters of the fight against extremism by the population, by members of all ethnic groups in the country.

Bribe-taking and other unscrupulous behavior by members of law enforcement and the security agencies, which is seen as unfair by families of arrestees, thus leads them to join extremist organizations. The extremist organizations, in turn, can take advantage of this situation and start recruiting the relatives of those who were innocently arrested, offering support to their families.

The survey revealed that the marginalized ethnic groups are also subject to radicalization. Those who have become isolated in their communities and not involved in social life and processes are especially

vulnerable. Exerted pressure on these individuals by government authorities and members of law enforcement can push the ethnic Uzbeks toward radicalism and joining such organizations where there appear to be no separation on ethnic grounds, and they can address all the ethnic issues within religion.

All the above contributes to the marginalized status of marginalized ethnic groups, when nobody ever listens to them and, due to their fear and passiveness, they are not able to reach the superior government authorities. The ideology of IS makes the members of these marginalized ethnic groups feel personally fulfilled. In the land held by IS, there is said to be no manifestation of ethnic hatred, and these marginalized individuals can participate in building a new fair state, where social projects are successfully and effectively implemented, and a dream that they would be able to live in a safe country built on religious principles.

Unwillingness to be integrated into the Kyrgyzstan society and closeness has been observed among some ethnic groups from those communities.

The collapse of the unified religious educational system. The absence of the unified religious and Islamic educational system after the independence of Kyrgyzstan had led to infiltrations of Islamic streams to Kyrgyzstan, both moderate and radical from different Islamic countries.

The Islamicization process of Kyrgyzstan in the early years of its independence had been progressing freely. At that time, the society had neither clear understandings nor different opinions between radical and extremist understandings (schools) of Islam and moderate Islam; all the methods of understanding brought from Islamic countries were perceived and continue to be perceived as genuine and real Islam.

Lack of information among the population about the radical and extremist religious organizations led people to become recruited due to ignorance.

Noncritical evaluation of radical and extremist interpretations of Islam is related to an inability, unwillingness, and incapability to analyze information obtained.

Lack of critical thinking causes ideological motives, when some believers who travelled to Syria would like to easily and without particular efforts go to Heaven.

It is a commonly known fact that IS uses a concept of Jihad while recruiting. If a person dies while on this supposed path of Jihad, he is said to go to Heaven. Many people, while in crisis and facing personal problems, try to find the best options to solve them. They join IS, justifying their actions on wrongly interpreted principles of Islam.

Modern processes such as a drop in the level of secular education resulted in forming a generation that, due to lack of appropriate knowledge, had become noncompetitive; it was not able to prove itself and attain self-realization. This part of the society could not find its place in life, it became marginalized, for which the only way of self-realization was finding itself within a Jamaat or becoming a member of religious radical and extremist organization.

The survey found that the following categories of the population travel to combat zones: members of religious and extremist organizations; people who only started professing Islam, so-called “neophytes” having no understanding about Islam; people who received basic information and knowledge about Islam from radical groups; people who are in crisis due to personal problems; and also people from moderate Jamaats; etc.

The attractiveness of the ideology of radical and extremist organizations is that they offer simple sets of rules and concepts, which ease the basic principles and observance of Islamic rituals, as well as many immoral actions being defended in the name of religion.

The presence of extremist organizations in the country. The presence and functioning of extremist organizations on the territory of Kyrgyzstan is also a factor of radicalization, as recruiters and members of the same organizations travel to Syria to take part in combat.

It is widely known that the ideological foundation of all the radical and extremist organizations is the idea to establish a fair caliphate, which can be resided in only by people who observe the religious principles. Noncompliance may lead to physical punishment up to execution.

The radical and extremist organizations do not perceive the values of the secular state and do not feel themselves citizens of Kyrgyzstan. The only values they want they claim are religious, but they are in fact political. Most do not recognize that these ideas are in fact political.

Key risk groups for radicalization:

A) **Imams.** Both officially and in society, there is an opinion that imams are not educated well enough to ideologically counter extremists, and do not make adequate efforts to prevent extremism. In general, it is necessary to recognize such a state of affairs within our spiritual leaders. Imams are at risk as some of them may implicitly support the ideology and ideas of extremist groups. This is because they hold a dual position, when extremist organizations promote and are keen to practically implement one of the foremost ideas of Islam – Sharia principles - and, from other side, they have to support the secular State policy, which has announced Western values in the form of democracy.

It is commonly acknowledged that the majority of religious leaders from Islamic States condemn Western values and democracy and perceive these as contradictory to Islamic values.

However, today, imams are at risk and their security is not guaranteed and ensured. Respondents noted that imams have been continuously threatened by extremist organizations.

B) **Tablighi Jamaat (TJ).** Considering TJ's adaptation to the local environment and agenda, it has gained its own specific futures and changed, and the movement. In some cases, radical elements take advantage of the practice of Dawat. TJ has an informal but legal status.

In some cases, those who are members of TJ have become members of radical and extremist groups. Blind following of a religious leader happens due to lack of critical thinking, and within that Jamaat they maintain a principle “ask few questions,” which may drive mental confusion.

C) **Labor migrants from all three oblasts.** Labor migrants to Russia and Turkey are subject to recruitment. The recruiters are the Takfirists and

members of other extremist movements from the Caucasus, who provide support in finding accommodation and a job. The migrants are uneducated, often do not speak Russian, and in most cases are in irregular situations. Moreover, having traveled to Russia as labor migrants they normally do not practice Islam. The labor migrants are represented from all three oblasts. For example, migrants from Batken oblast include: Kadamjai, Kyzyl-Kiya, Uch-Korgon, Batken Town; from Osh Oblast: Osh City, Aravan, Yusupova, Alyanarova, Kara-Suu Town, Nariman, Kashkarkyshtak, Sovoi, Kyzylkyshtak, Uzgen, Jany Nookat, Eski Nookat.

Upon their return to homes, the labor migrants “broadcast” extremist ideas among their relatives and acquaintances. The labor migrants are not worked with at either the places of their arrival or their motherland. Departure to Syria occurs particularly through the Russian Federation. Their fellow citizens recruit these labor migrants in Russia as well.

D) Women in all three oblasts. Unmarried women, divorced women, and those facing family problems. Women are subject to pressure by their parents, neighbors, husbands, and society. Condemnation of divorced women force them to take desperate steps in changing their lives and seeking to build a new family. For example, relations between mothers-in-law and young daughters-in-law, particularly in Uzbek families, result in divorces. These divorced women, who married before achieving even modest educational achievement, are stigmatized and left alone, becoming more vulnerable to recruitment to extremist groups, who claim to be able to solve their problems and promise a route to Heaven.

The main challenge for women from these three oblasts is that they have no places and possibilities to fully satisfy their needs in religion. First of all, this is due to the fact that officially and in practice no attention is paid to female believers. SAMK is neither putting in efforts nor creating an environment in order to educate female believers. In fact, women are unable to satisfy their religious needs as there no specialized institutions or buildings where they could receive information and gain knowledge. While there are madrassas designed for young girls, women above 20 have no capacities to satisfy their needs in religions. If men can get any information and knowledge during khutbas in mosques, women do not even have the right to enter mosques.

Communities of women are yet to be institutionalized and legitimized and they are lacking the capacity to satisfy their religious needs.

There is a higher demand in regards to religious education for females than males. Among the nonofficial and nongovernment organizations that are actively and positively involved in this area, there is an NGO namely “Mutakalim” that through its regional branches has organized different competitions, courses, trainings, seminars, and advocacy campaigns among women. This is the only organization acting in Kyrgyzstan that fulfills that niche preventing the infiltration of radical ideas, and satisfying the religious needs of women. The organization issues certificates upon completion of courses to its graduates that authorize them to teach other females.

E) Socially vulnerable populations. These are orphans, children from single-parent families, and children whose parents work as migrants in Russia. In Jalal-Abad, there is an actively operating organization namely “Akromiya,” which has monopolized the business of auto spare parts, building materials, sale of construction paints, etc. Probably, “Akromiya” implements its local program within Jalal-Abad oblast. The organizational system of “Akromiya” is based on mutual trust between its members.

Forms of radical activities or working methods on recruiting radical groups are complex and meet modern trends. One of the forms of radical activity, which this extremist group “Akromiya” implements in Jalal-Abad oblast, is based on the working system used by NGOs and international organizations.

The feature of “Akromiya’s” activity is aimed at getting into power through business and financing. Probably, its members pay “high kickbacks” to the authorities and therefore there are no ongoing campaigns against their radicalism conducted by law enforcement in Jalal-Abad. Unlike “Akromiya,” Hizb ut-Tahrir members openly talk about corruption and condemn the authorities.

Such informal way of communication namely “Gyap” (meetings of like-minded persons) to some extent serves as the channel to recruit into radical and extremist organizations; “Gyap” is typical for members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities (Uzbeks) and it gathers classmates and friends, where

they can share opinions and views. “Gyap” brings everyone together, who have different opinions and views covering different aspects, during which time informal conversations take place, normally at someone’s house over *plov* (an Uzbek meal).

A similar form of communication over *plov* has spread among the ethnic Kyrgyz population, which is called “Top” the gathering over the “Plov” that previously were not observed among the younger generation and normally had been practicing by elderly people. Now, it has spread not only among the youth, but also among women and even school-aged children. Among the youth in 10-11th grades, students of 1-2 year of study and based on such communication there were founded semi-criminal, adolescent, and youth groups, which are ready to cooperate with criminal.

The young people associate themselves with those criminal groups, which make them feel “cool” and romanticize youth. These groups are called “grey groups,” but they call themselves “vagrants,” “bandits,” or even “Nazis,” who during daytime they are invisible or “grey colors”, involved into normal life, but at night, they gather in their group. It appears to be the first stage to feel the criminal world.

Such groups are mainly found in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Kyzyl-Kia. There is a danger that they can be the tool or used by criminal elements and politicians, who become the main driving forces and catalysts of interethnic conflicts.

Radicalization catalysts:

1. A lack of communication between the population and authorities exists. There is an absence of channels for communication, and lack of cooperation between authorities and ethnic and religious communities. The gap between the authorities and members of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups and religious communities means that nobody hears their voices and they are unable to reach the higher authorities. There is a lack of access to higher authorities, who should address and deal with these issues. Such a situation is observed in in all three oblasts, where members of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups and religious communities reside.
2. Aggressive and radicalized imams act as catalysts of conflicts between Muslims and Protestants, as well as between Muslims and Tengrianism followers, by their negative statements, and condemn as well as provoke radical and extremist organizations into conflict. In the town of Suzak, for example, Islam has traditionally had more followers, but, at the same time, there are supporters of Protestant denominations from both title nationality and ethnic minorities. Imams perceive Protestants in a radical manner and, probably under the influence of imams, Muslims believers also have radical perceptions regarding Protestants.
3. Law enforcement agencies act as catalysts, as, in most cases, their members employ mainly repressive methods that may cause a reverse effect, particularly among members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities. Low awareness on the part of government authorities and members of law enforcement about the living specifics, mentality, history, cultural diversity of different ethnicities and religious communities may lead to a situation, where law enforcement officials are guided by stereotypes and employ repressive methods by arresting innocent people and accusing them of extremism. All these factors drive people and families of arrestees to join the radical and extremist organizations. The extremist organizations, in turn, can take advantage of this situation and start recruiting among their family members. It is noteworthy that ethnic and religious communities have their own features in every oblast and rayon.

4. Graduates and students of religious universities in foreign Muslim countries can be catalysts. When compared in the national level as a whole, Batken oblast represents the highest number of students who have received local religious education, as well as religious education in other Muslim States: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, etc. The graduates from these countries provide classes in the main religious educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan. In those countries, our citizens study at both state and private religious educational institutions. Private religious educational institutions are a subject of concern, because they can be created by radical and extremist organizations on the territory of these countries. These schools may teach radical and extremist ideologies. After returning from these Muslim states, the graduates bring with them different methods of Islamic interpretation. This has resulted in the emergence of public segregation of different Jamaats and an ideological rift in the understanding of Islam.
5. Struggle for power and “turf wars” in religion, society, within the religious leadership, between Imams and all that lead to a violent conflict. Within various schools people mainly find what they need, can determine their present needs and their capabilities. If someone feels he is lacking self-realization in the sociopolitical life of the society, developed intellectually and keen evolve, can find themselves in such organization as Hizb ut-Tahrir. If someone has a propensity for sports or martial arts and is willing to realize himself or, on the contrary, is less developed physically, but wants to be “cool,” they can travel to Syria to take part in combat. The others, who are lazier and do not want to be overloaded with complex ideological concepts can realize themselves in Tablighi Jamaat. They are all linked by a nonacceptance of the existing order and realities, and a desire toward self-realization and establishment.

Chapter III. Political Radicalism

Perception of individual criminals and opposition politicians as heroes and patriots. The high level of distrust in authorities is evident in people when they approach criminals in order to solve their problems. The criminal “resolves” any problems, including social issues: they build roads, finance sporting events, sponsor sportsmen, assist people to travel on a Hajj, construct mosques, etc. The main financial sources of criminals at a local level are foreign investors and enterprises, which have to pay informal taxes. Chon-Alai inhabitants idealize and glorify criminal individuals. They glorify B. Erkinbaev and A. Anapiyaev, because they were oppressing the non-Kyrgyz population and did not let them “raise their heads.” Monoethnic communities become isolated, because residents there are unaware of the mentalities and dialects of Kyrgyz from other regions of Kyrgyzstan. Monoethnic zones are highly politicized and mainly home to ethnonationalists.

Therefore, those politicians who raise ethnic issues with chauvinistic rhetoric are supported and popular, whereas the population is not interested in either political or economic programs of the politicians.

In most cases, the authorities, in the eyes of the ordinary population, have made individual opposition politicians martyrs. The society perceives any sense of opposition to the existing authorities as a manifestation of the struggle for justice, and it creates idealization and glorification of personality or an individual politician.

Both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents of Osh have started idealizing and glorifying M. Myrzakmatov, the former mayor of Osh. Criminal elements idealize him, too. The expulsion of M. Myrzakmatov was accepted by the population as unfair and exacerbated the mistrust of state authorities and agencies. In most cases, opposition politicians and those under prosecution by the government authorities are idealized and glorified, because they have their own independent position.

Aside from politicians and criminals, imams have become active participants of political processes. Today, imams are precisely that driving force – personalities, who the people demonstrate their trust in. Most of the

communities' residents consider any statements and decisions taken during Friday Khutbah as unconditionally binding.

Perception of policies and state power as sources and tools of enrichment. There is a high degree of politicization among all the segments of the population, particularly among the youth in Batken oblast. People express their grievances to the state authorities, demonstrate political ambitions, condemn the parliamentary system and are keen to change the public administration system toward one of personal rule and authoritarian power.

The paramount goal for the youth is to get into political power by any means in order to realize their ambitious aspirations and implement their personal ambitions and dominance over the people. The political power is perceived as a source for self-enrichment, employing all the methods, both forcible and violent means up to and including open conflicts. There is a worrying tendency that the youth lack ideology, principles, and morals for attaining power.

Employing martial arts clubs as a tool to obtain power by forcible means. Groups of sportsmen have emerged in Osh, who turned their services into businesses by assisting in resolving certain issues, extracting debts for a fee, and organizing disorders and rallies. These clubs were established to only provide training in martial arts, but its members are prepared to use violence against others. Politicians under the color of youth assistance usually establish these kind of sports clubs. Some coaches are also involved in establishing such clubs, and they can execute any order for the right price; they do not care whether it is a political or ethnic issue. For them, the issue is usually about money.

Similar to in Osh, groups of sportsmen have emerged in Jalal-Abad who have also turned their services into a business through providing assistance in resolving certain issues, extracting debts for a fee, and organizing disorder and rallies. These clubs were also established to provide trainings only in martial arts. In Jalal-Abad, one such club is named "Taimuras."

The members of these clubs are actively employed during the electoral processes. In the village of Pulgon, in Batken oblast, there is a similar youth

club named “Altyn Kadam.” The aim of this group is to achieve power by a full range of methods, including radical means such as intimidation, and physical and psychological pressure. The group consists mainly of males, who were born in 1987-1988 and have political ambitions.

The youth sportsmen, without higher education, are semi-criminal elements. In order to get into power, which is considered to be a source for self-enrichment and access to financial resources, they are ready to employ violent methods.

Some sportsmen leaders represent semi-criminal elements and, at the same time, are members of Kyzil–Kiya Town Kenesh (local town council) of Batken oblast. A merger between semi-criminal elements and ethnnationalistic forces has been observed. Their slogans, factors of regionalism, and tribalism are used (belonging to a tribe “Ichkilik”). There is an opinion that as long as a person is from the south, it does not matter what political system would be. The principle “he is fool, but he is our fool” is often used. These sports clubs are also financed and supported by entrepreneurs, which enable them to protect their businesses from seizure and competitors, as well as promote it.

Labor migration. Labor migration among youth has contributed to the transformation of traditional relationships between older and younger generations. It resulted in a diminished credibility of the Aksakals’ institution (*Aksakals – old wise man*) and their roles, positions, and influence in society. Youth migration to Russia, Turkey, and other countries has led to the loss of values in conservative society. The youth started depriving Aksakals of their levels of influence, taking the lead in decision making and usurping them. There is mistrust among the young people regarding the Aksakals’ institution, and they see it as an exhausted resource.

Catalysts of conflicts and radicalization:

Depending on the situation, personal interests, political climate, etc., some groups act as both catalysts and stabilizers of conflicts and radicalization in the society.

A) Aksakals' institution. In some areas of Batken (Village of Pulgon), Aksakals act as catalysts of radicalization despite having lost control over their levers of influence. Aksakals with tribalist views motivate the youth to get into power by employing any means necessary, including invasive methods.

B) Politicians and elections. Individual politicians also act as catalysts by financing and supporting sports clubs, which are then used to settle problems by invasive and violent methods, organize rallies, etc. Political forces and local representatives of political parties act as catalysts during the parliamentary, presidential, and local elections. Discords, disagreements, and conflicts take place during the elections. Even within a village we may observe separations. During the elections, discords occur on a regional and tribal basis up to and including conflicts on the family level. Such processes were observed within monoethnic Kyrgyz communities in all three oblasts.

C) International organizations and NGOs become catalysts, when they carry out surveys covering sensitive and delicate issues in the wrong way and without knowing the context, mentality, and proper approaches. All the topics raised by NGOs and international organizations are perceived as an imposition of ideas supported by Western countries.

Moreover, people expect specific and practical outcomes from NGOs, such as the construction of water pipelines and infrastructure. Trainings and seminars are not perceived by ordinary people as in line with their mentality, and are seen with suspicion. Lately, communities perceive the activities of NGOs and international organizations with concern and mistrust. On an official level, the draft law on "Foreign Agents" is under review and all the NGOs could fall within this category. Besides, there is a widespread negative opinion about their activities that international organizations and NGOs collect information on in the fields, in order to further submit it to foreign countries, from where they receive funds.

In the current situation, religious communities and members of non-Kyrgyz ethnicities perceive NGOs and international organization with caution and distrust; there have been cases when they were thrown out. There have been instances of expulsion of NGO experts, who had arrived to

a community to carry out research. NGOs and international organizations ask incorrect questions or raise issues without considering the specifics of the region while completing their research, thereby creating negative perceptions towards themselves and radical attitudes among the local population.

D) OBON. OBON is a group of aggressive women, who had been actively employed before by politicians for rallies and in achieving power. Women from these groups execute orders of politicians, mainly for a fee. For example, taking advantage of the fact that law enforcement agents would not use force against them, they have been known to attack opponents of a politician, who was their customer. Now, OBON has left the political scene and is more involved in “addressing” the daily routines in normal life. However, for a fee they fulfill orders to use force against people. They are between the ages from 40 to 60 with prevailing nationalistic and tribalist views.

E) Rumors and mass media. The lack of credible and open information creates the effect of the “broken telephone.” This also gives rise to manipulations on behalf of mass media and politicians with a negative interpretation. There is a high level of distrust in official sources of information and official TV channels among the population of all three oblasts and people are more likely to believe informal sources of information such as rumors.

Risk groups:

A) Migrants from Alai, Chon – Alai, and Batken and Jalal-Abad oblasts, who have moved to Osh. Osh City becomes a center of migration processes for people arriving from rural areas of Osh and Batken oblasts. Radical ideologies are prevailing among the closed monoethnic groups, both of Kyrgyz and Uzbek composition. This leads to interethnic conflicts, and migrants, due to their politicized nature, are ready to employ radical and extremist actions in the political processes. All the NGOs and international organizations have worked with local people from Osh, but have never

interacted with internal migrants into Osh. As for the city inhabitants themselves, they have been cooperating and living together over years and centuries, and have never had any conflicts.

B) Sportsmen. Adolescents and young sportsmen, who train in sports clubs founded by politicians and coaches in order to employ invasive methods in a political struggle, are at high risk and some of them have already become radicalized and participate in extremist activity. This portion of the youth is specially trained and provides an example that the use of violent tactics can achieve a solution to an issue. Moreover, they attract other youth by providing the sports halls and coaches for trainings almost free of charge. The recruits are mainly from socially vulnerable segments of the population, and have no possibilities to obtain higher education. Under the patronage of politicians they become semi-criminal elements. A similar system is used by coaches, who possess their own sports halls, where they select the most successful young people in sports, from the poor, offering ways to make money.

c) Youth with political ambitions. In all three oblasts, there are groups of young people, who show high political ambitions and are ready to cooperate with all the parties: criminals, political extremists, and those prepared to employ violent methods in achieving political power. The government authorities see them as representing opportunities for self-enrichment. Politicians and criminals are manipulating and employing the ambitions of this category of youth. Moreover, this portion of the youth gathers itself into different sports groups to struggle for political power.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Demonstrate to members from monoethnic Kyrgyz communities how members of non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups actually live, in order to dispel the myth that their living conditions are better than their own, as well as to show that they are equally vulnerable. Furthermore, this will show the effects their unlawful actions lead to, and vice versa. This can be done, for example, through organizing the visits to monoethnic Uzbek or Tajik communities, or making a short documentary to disseminate among members from monoethnic communities.
2. Teach inhabitants from both multiethnic and monoethnic communities via trainings how to check and react to rumors under different situations. More importantly, train them how to prevent rumormongering in their communities on their own or through cooperation with law enforcement agencies and other local authorities. Organize a public awareness campaign, and / or establish a platform aimed at discussion of rumors and their short- and long-term consequences.
3. Organize and / or support cooperation between (perceived as “monoethnic”) law enforcement agencies and members of both Kyrgyz and other ethnic groups from monoethnic Uzbek and / or multiethnic communities to prevent the rise of nationalism on both sides. This will allow ordinary citizens and members from both Kyrgyz and other ethnicities to feel like full participants of the law-enforcement process rather than being just a target of the work.
4. Create mechanisms to maintain communication and carry out joint activities between various ethnic communities through the support of common activities aimed at addressing mutual challenges. For example, support joint initiative on IT in Aravan village, intended to support rapprochement of Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth through a common interest (in this case IT). Disseminate such ideas among other communities, but in

different directions and depending on the common interest of the youth from both sides.

5. Provide assistance to the regional police departments (“ROVD”), city police departments (“GOVD”), or the Ministry of Interior (“MVD”) in preparing a “community profile,” which does not mean providing only the statistical data, but also information on perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes among the local population of the targeted communities (especially Uzbek or Tajik communities). This would help the employees sent to these communities to avoid falling back on their preconceptions about the inhabitants, as they would have previously prepared a clear picture about them.

6. Make short video clips and documentaries about the livelihood of religious communities, innocent arrestees, and relatives of extremists. Show and bring to the attention of law enforcement agencies, other state agencies, and national movements on actually ethnic minorities live in order to dispel the myth that their living conditions are better than theirs, as well as show that they are equally vulnerable and what are the effects their unlawful actions and brutality lead to.

7. Arrange trainings on “Aqida” (belief, conviction) for imams, informal religious leaders, and informal youth leaders. Publish brochures for local imams on topical issues, questions and answers, which are raised by extremist groups, so that imams would be able to provide substantiated responses.

8. Provide trainings for women on their rights, increase their legal literacy on marriage and divorce issues, physiological trainings on family relations, female leadership, etc. Work with local authorities, Aksakals, the mahalla (community) leaders on issues connected to women; suggest establishing a female council in each Mahalla.

9. Organize youth events, involving successful and renowned people, who can share positive examples and demonstrate progress that someone can achieve their desired objectives by their own labor. For instance, successful sportsmen, youth leaders, etc., may be invited.
10. Organize round tables, dialogues, and meetings, involving multiple parties. It is necessary to provide a platform for dialogue, a “free microphone” to express points of view, and give the floor to the representatives of all Jamaats, extremist organizations, stakeholders, opposing sides, law enforcement agencies, theological experts, etc.
11. Conduct a study in religious communities of each region. This survey found that religious communities have their own specifics in every oblast and rayon. Based on the study, publish small brochures and profiles for local authorities and law enforcement agencies about the specifics of religious and ethnic communities.
12. Provide training to members of law enforcement at all levels (community police officers, investigators, MVD 10th Main Department, etc.), who work in the field on issues related to cultural aspects and mentality of religious and ethnic groups of every region.
13. Organize trainings, seminars, publish brochures for all ethnic groups about Aqida and Islam in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik languages.
14. Conduct trainings and seminars for young people who have not yet been involved in radical or religious organizations. Provide information on what is correct from an Islamic and legal perspective.
15. Provide trainings and seminars on Aqida and Islam, involving theological experts during the winter, when labor migrants return from Russia.

16. Provide trainings on peace building for sportsmen, adolescents, and youth from sports clubs. Organize meetings involving successful sportsmen. Law enforcement and security services must contact informal leaders of these groups to work with them and take preventive measures. Organize interactive trainings in informal settings. The mistake of NGOs is that they work with officials and “stock” communities, which do not pose problems. The problems are posed by sportsmen, radical groups, criminals, and marginalized groups, i.e., those who are left without meaningful government or NGO scrutiny. Provide interactive trainings for the youth through the method of Dawat followers. For instance, Tablighi Jamaat has helped many sportsmen abandon the criminal lifestyle. It is important to organize trainings for youth sportsmen in an informal setting, such as at home or in the mosque.

17. Carry out work with OBON women through trainings on the role and place of females in the society and families from an Islamic perspective, covering the topics of female leadership.

18. Conduct trainings for local authorities on the following: How to involve local communities, radical individuals, and the population in the decision-making process to address various issues? Trainings for the population on: How to participate in the decision-making process? The key point of these trainings should aim at teaching the population how to tolerantly interact with the local authorities towards joint decision-making and be liable for the decisions taken.

19. Conduct trainings for labor migrants and marginalized visitors on tolerance, culture, mentality of ethnic minorities, specifics of residency, cooperation, communications on multiethnic society, and doing business within city conditions. Trainings may be organized from an Islamic perspective.

20. Conduct trainings for information departments of the state agencies – Administration of the President, Administration of the Prime Minister and Ministries of Kyrgyzstan on the following topics: state information policy and public information and outreach. Information manipulation or a complete absence of transparent information contributes to the growth of political radicalism and extremism.